

The Star Ferry of Hong Kong

Connecting two halves of one of
the world's great port cities.

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- The City of Hong Kong is located on Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsula within the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR) in the People's Republic of China.
- The Hong Kong SAR encompasses Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and various neighboring islands in the South China Sea.
- Hong Kong divided by the waters of the Victoria Bay, which is one of the world's busiest deepwater harbors.
- Hong Kong has a population of about 6.9 million people. The urban core of Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated areas in the world, with a population of approximately 6,250 people per square kilometer.

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- The topography and population density of Hong Kong do not favor the use of automobiles as a primary transportation mode.
- There are less than 350,000 licensed privately-owned cars in Hong Kong. In comparison, there were more than 1.6 million cars registered in New York City in 2004.
- Nearly two-thirds of all personal transportation in Hong Kong is accomplished through public transit systems. About 11 million passenger trips are made daily.
- Most Hong Kong commuters presently rely on bus lines, which carry nearly 4 million riders per day. The next most popular transit mode is the heavy and light railways which transport more than 3 million people every day.

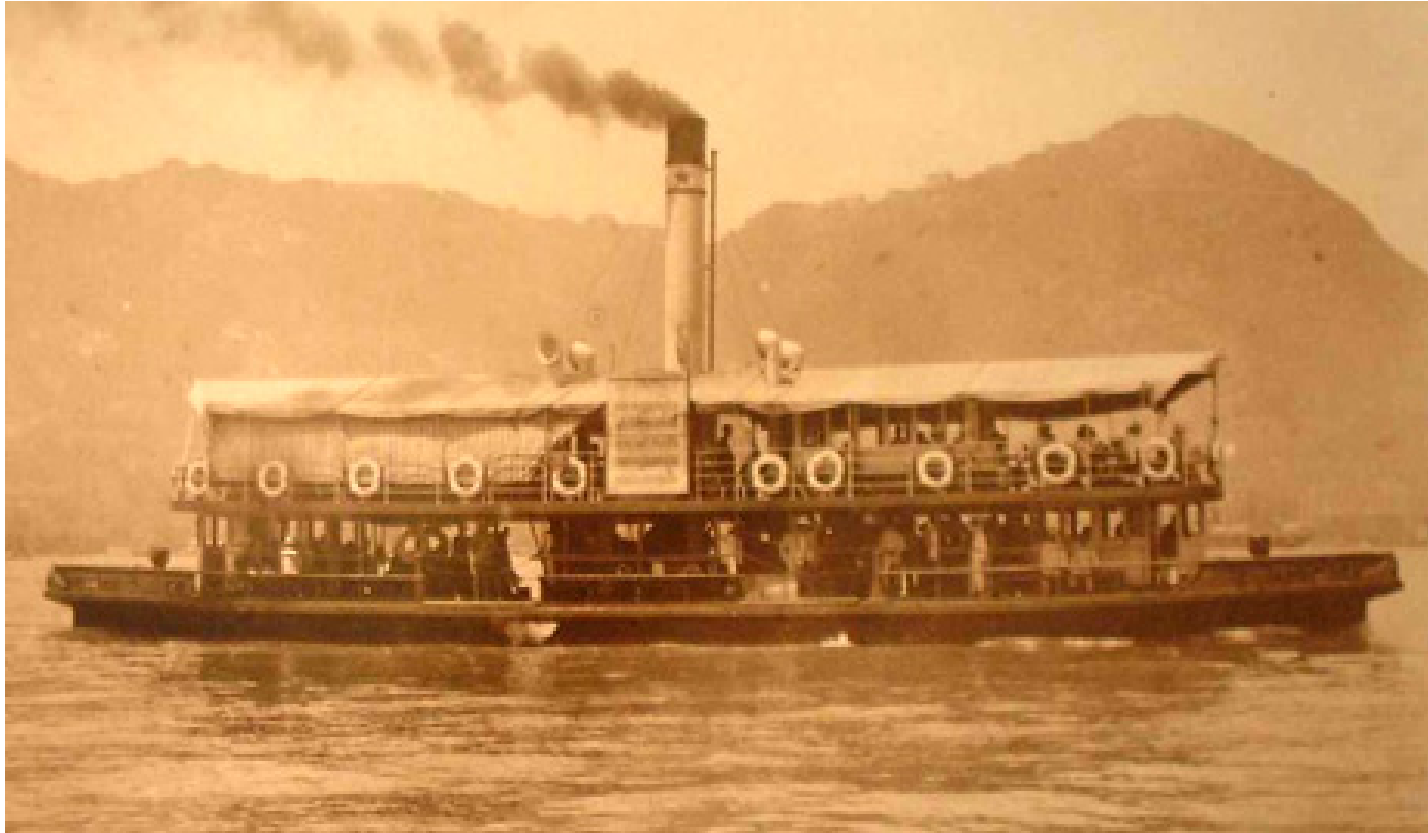
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- For much of Hong Kong's history, ferries were the only means of crossing Victoria Harbour.
- In 1972, the Cross-Harbour Tunnel linking Hong Kong Island to Kowloon was opened to automobile traffic.
- The first railway tunnel linking Kowloon and Hong Kong Island by subway was opened in 1980.
- By the end of the twentieth century, three additional tunnels had been constructed under Victoria Harbour for highway and rail lines.
- The Harbour tunnels sharply reduced the public's reliance on ferries to travel between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.

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- Hong Kong Island and Kowloon have been linked by ferries since the city's formation.
- Ferries also link Hong Kong with the outlying islands of Hong Kong SAR, Macau, and mainland China.
- Approximately 152,000 people ride Hong Kong ferries each day.

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- The first ferry between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon began operating in 1888 using a vessel named the “Morning Star”.
- In 1898, the Star Ferry Company, Ltd. acquired ownership of the “Morning Star” and its sister vessels. The “Star” ferries were originally powered by coal.
- The first diesel powered ferry was introduced in 1933.

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- The Star Ferry line runs four routes across Victoria Bay from Kowloon to Hong Kong Island.
- The Star Ferry fleet consists of twelve diesel-electric ferries, including two vessels capable of carrying 750 passengers at a time.
- Although the Star Ferry is a well-known tourist attraction which provides spectacular vistas of the Hong Kong skyline and the harbor, the ferry continues to be used by some commuters because it is the least expensive way to cross the harbor (cheapest fare is less than \$0.25 U.S.).

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- Star Ferry provided transportation for 25 million passengers in 2003, with a daily average of 68,462 passengers.
- The Hong Kong ferry companies collectively provide more than 55 million passenger rides annually.
- In comparison, the New York City's Staten Island Ferry, which operates five vessels on a 24-hour schedule every day of the year, carried approximately 19 million passengers in 2004.

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- In 1997, the Government of Hong Kong SAR Transport Department commissioned a “Third Comprehensive Transport Study” for the purpose of evaluating Hong Kong’s public transit infrastructure and formulating a strategy for the development of an improved public transit system by the year 2016.
- Public transit will account for almost 90% of all personal travel in Hong Kong by 2016.
- The Study concluded that the government should devote most of its resources to the development of railways, which were projected to surpass bus lines as the primary mode of public transportation by 2016, carrying as many as 50% of all public transit passengers.

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- Ferries were ranked last in Hong Kong's hierarchy of public transport modes, behind railways, buses, trams and taxis.
- Ferries had the least usage among all of the ranked public transit modes.
- Ferries have higher operating costs than rail or bus lines.
- Hong Kong TD has concluded that ferries should be used as a supplement to the bus and rail lines using the Harbour tunnels for traveling between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.
- Ferries continue to provide an “essential service” for public transit to the outlying islands of the Hong Kong SAR.